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Mr. Nadig Sivappa (from Sorab Taluk) and Mr. Kanlé Devappa (from Sagar Taluk).

Subject No. II.

Halat on Supari.

Summary of discussion.—The Halat duty (land customs) on Supari is inconvenient to both growers and merchants. Being an addition to the heavy assessment of garden lands, it presses very hard. A double tax like Halat and Assessment is unjust. It gives occasion for corruption and petty oppression on the part of Government officials. It imposes great restrictions on freedom of trade. It is inquisitorial on growers. It also hampers free transfer of lands. As a rule, garden owners are in a state of chronic indebtedness and are not thriving as rice-land-holders are. Owing to the existence of the Halat system, minor *Suttigedars* have sprung up among garden-owners themselves. They are not real supari merchants. They borrow capital from others, paying interest and a portion of profits for such loans. With this capital they make small advances to growers and buy up their produce which they afterwards sell for a handsome profit to merchants. These minor *suttigedars* tempt garden owners into debt who in the long run are ruined. If the Halat is abolished, the garden owners will have no temptation to borrow and there will be an encouragement to improve garden cultivation. The assessment need not be reduced if the Halat be abolished. It is not true that supari stealing will increase, if Halat is abolished. The supari is prepared by garden-holders in their own houses, and therefore cannot be stolen as coffee is stolen from estates. The system of issuing Rahadaris is no safe-guard against thefts while the supari is in transit, and that of requiring chits to be taken out by the growers is most inconvenient. As the Rahadaris cease to be in force at the frontier of the Mysore State, there is nothing to prevent supari being stolen beyond that limit. The majority of garden owners and the merchants of Bellary are for the abolition of Halat duty. The latter are hampered by the local *suttigedars*, whom the Halat system has brought into existence and who therefore are for keeping it and reducing the land assessment in preference. The fact that the garden owners are, as a body, in a state of chronic indebtedness, and that holders of rice-lands are in prosperous condition clearly proves that the Halat system is bad.

Per Contra, it was urged that the abolition of the Halat would benefit the consumers of supari by lowering its price in the market and would in no way benefit the producer who would continue to get for his produce what he now gets or even less. This happened in the case of tobacco, cordamom and pepper which formerly paid a land customs duty as the supari now does. Nor would the dealers in supari be much benefited. They would lose also by competition with producer who when the Halat is abolished would himself take small quantties of his produce to the market and sell it for whatever

he can get for it to meet the pressing wants of the moment and thus by reducing the price prejudice the interests of other garden owners and the wholesale merchants who have bought and stored up large quantities for sale. By the abolition of Halat supari stealing would be facilitated. On the other hand garden owners have to spend large sums of money in cultivation and have besides to pay a heavy rate of assessment, and their supari is often attacked by rot ("Kolé Roga"); so that as a result of all these causes many of them are involved in heavy debt for which their gardens are mortgaged. If their condition is to be bettered, the rate of assessment must be reduced. The reduction will encourage them to cultivate waste lands and plant more gardens; whereby the loss to the Government by reduction in assessment on existing gardens will be compensated by additional revenue from new gardens. Such producers of supari as have preferred the abolition of the Halat duty have done so under the wrong impression that they would thereby be benefitted. Whereas the result would be otherwise as above explained.

Mr. Srinivasa Rao (Planter from Chikmagalur Municipality) remarked that the cases of tobacco and cardamoms were not parallel with that of supari in question, inasmuch as the latter was a speciality of this country and could command in the market all the existing price which the consumer could afford to give, whereas the former were grown and more successfully grown in other parts of the world.

Halat presses the cultivator who, by working hard, spending much and cultivating high, produces much. Whereas, it does not touch the lazy man who produces little or nothing. Those who are *Suttigedars*, want the Halat to be kept on. Cultivators wish it to be abolished. The earlier members of the Dasara Representative Assembly were *Suttigedars*. The latter have been cultivators. Hence the change in the views here advocated.

Dewan's reply.—The matter is, at present, under the consideration of Government.

Mr. Nadiga Sivappa (Land-holder from Sorab Taluk).

Subject No. 12. Village Munsiffs Bill.

Summary of discussion.—The proposed Village Munsiffs' Regulation should be passed early for the benefit of traders and others. It might be tried at least experimentally in some parts of the State. This would save the trouble of people going long distances to Munsiff's Courts for suing for small debts and incurring expenditure out of all proportion to the amount involved in the suit. *Per contra* it was urged that the introduction of the bill in question is opposed on the following grounds :—

(*a*) That factious spirit still plays the most important part in villages.